

Turkey court says Twitter helps free speech

5th April, 2014



A court in Turkey has said the country's Twitter ban prevents free speech. It said that blocking Twitter takes away people's right to express themselves freely. The Turkish government blocked Twitter on March the 21st. The Prime Minister, Tayyip

Erdogan, was angry because someone posted audio files of his close advisors just days before the country's elections. The files revealed details of possible corruption in Turkey that could be embarrassing for the government. Mr Erdogan is a big critic of social networks. As well as blocking Twitter, he also ordered the blocking of YouTube for a while. He said in an election campaign speech: "We will wipe out Twitter. I don't care what the international community says."

The Twitter ban did not work as Mr Erdogan wanted it to. Turks found many ways to get on Twitter without using the normal channels. Internet companies say there was a surge in tweets after the ban but usage is down to half of what it was before. Many Turks are furious with the government for banning Twitter. They are determined to make sure they can access the micro-blogging site. The court agreed with the people. It said: "Everyone has the right to express and [share] his/her thoughts and opinions by speech, in writing, in pictures or through other media." Twitter was happy with the court's announcement. Its global public policy team tweeted: "We hope to have Twitter access restored in Turkey soon."

Sources: Reuters / Hurriyet Daily / CNET.com

Writing

1. No site should ever be banned from the Internet. Discuss.
2. Compare and contrast Twitter and Facebook. Which is best, and why?

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

court / free speech / angry / audio files / corruption / critic / election / speech / care / normal / channels / Internet companies / blogging / opinions / announcement

True / False

- a) A Turkish court turned Twitter off in Turkey on March 21. T / F
- b) The Turkish prime minister was unhappy people put his photos online. T / F
- c) The Turkish prime minister is not a big fan of social media websites. T / F
- d) The prime minister doesn't care how other countries view him. T / F
- e) The PM is very happy with the way the ban is going. T / F
- f) Twitter use is higher today than it was before the ban. T / F
- g) The court said people should be free to put their opinions online. T / F
- h) Twitter was pleased with what the court said. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. prevents | a. uploaded |
| 2. freely | b. fixed on |
| 3. posted | c. usual |
| 4. embarrassing | d. openly |
| 5. wipe out | e. increase |
| 6. normal | f. destroy |
| 7. surge | g. stops |
| 8. determined | h. put back |
| 9. opinions | i. uncomfortable |
| 10. restored | j. views |

Discussion – Student A

- a) Why do some countries dislike Twitter?
- b) Is it OK for a country to block Twitter?
- c) What would you do if you had no access to social networking sites?
- d) Can people say anything they want on Twitter?
- e) What do you think of Turkey's prime minister blocking Twitter?
- f) What technology things are you a big critic of?
- g) Is it possible to "wipe out" Twitter?
- h) How important do you think free speech is?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. takes away people's right | a. restored in Turkey soon |
| 2. The files revealed details of possible | b. the micro-blogging site |
| 3. a big critic | c. out Twitter |
| 4. We will wipe | d. thoughts and opinions |
| 5. I don't care what the international | e. to express themselves |
| 6. there was a surge | f. for banning Twitter |
| 7. Turks are furious with the government | g. corruption |
| 8. make sure they can access | h. community says |
| 9. express and share his/her | i. in tweets after the ban |
| 10. We hope to have Twitter access | j. of social networks |

Discussion – Student B

- What kind of sites is it OK for a country to block?
- What would life be like without the Internet?
- How important are sites like Twitter and Facebook?
- What do you think Turkey's government will do about Twitter?
- Do you think the ban has helped Turkey's leader?
- Are 140 characters enough to say what you want to say?
- Is it important for you to express your opinions online?
- What questions would you like to ask Turkey's leader?

Spelling

- ptrvnees free speech
- people's right to srpsxee themselves freely
- adoiu files
- days before the country's enictsloe
- details of possible ricpotonur
- nacmipga speech
- without using the normal lanhcens
- there was a regsu in tweets
- Turks are soruufi with the government
- thoughts and poinisin
- happy with the court's nuomtnaceenn
- have Twitter cseasc restored in Turkey soon

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. a	4. i	5. f
6. c	7. e	8. b	9. j	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Speed

You think speed is the most important for the Internet. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so important about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): wi-fi access, good content or security.

Role B – Wi-fi access

You think wi-fi access is the most important for the Internet. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so important about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): speed, good content or security.

Role C – Good content

You think good content is the most important for the Internet. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so important about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): wi-fi access, speed or security.

Role D – Security

You think security is the most important for the Internet. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so important about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): wi-fi access, good content or speed.

Speaking – Internet

Rank these with your partner. Put the things that need improving at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| • speed | • translation |
| • price | • password technology |
| • wi-fi access | • security |
| • content | • ease of use |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.